

Guideline for Bible Study

Leading

OVERVIEW

- There are many ways to understand the Bible, whether listening to sermons, reading the Bible or through Bible study. Perhaps the most effective way of understanding the word of God is through Bible study because of the discussion and the mutual understanding of the Scriptures that can be gained.
- Bible study leaders are responsible for guiding and leading a Bible study.
- Most importantly, a Bible study leader guides the group to learn the spiritual meanings and life applications of the passage being studied.
- The purpose of a Bible study is to edify the group through the study of the precious word of God.
 - *"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."* (Ps 119:105)
- A Christian's daily nourishment comes from spiritual bread, which is the word of God.
 - *"Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord "* (Amos 8:11)
 - *"Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance."* (Isa 55:2)
- Studying and abiding by the word of God can transform our lives, strengthen our faith, equip us with spiritual weapons, and allow us to draw closer to God.
 - *"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word "* (Ps 119:9)
 - *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Heb 4:12)
 - *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."* (Col 3:16)

OBJECTIVES

- Commence and lead Bible study
 - One of the main duties is to start the Bible study by praying in Lord Jesus' name, announcing the passage, and directing the group to read the passage.
 - Then, throughout the Bible study, the Bible study leader does his/her best to summarize the passage, transition from one aspect of the passage to the next, prompt the Bible study group members to participate, etc.

Guideline for Bible Study

Leading

- Emphasize the spiritual significance of the passage
 - Besides a mere summary and discussion of the events in the biblical passage, it is important for the Bible study leader to transcend the literal meaning of the passage. He/She should transition to and focus on the spiritual importance of the passage so that the group members can focus on key takeaways and apply them to their daily lives. Thus, it is essential to dedicate a segment to life application questions.

HOW TO

● Prior Preparation

○ Spiritual Preparation

- ___ Pray for the minds and hearts of the Bible study group members to be opened during the Bible study, for strength to be bold in speaking the word of God, for spiritual understanding of the passage, and for God's guidance.

○ Biblical Preparation

- ___ Read and observe the specific passage several times beforehand. Make note of words, phrases, paragraph structure, relationships, emphases, and patterns, including anything that may seem unusual. At the earliest opportunity, thoroughly read the passage and allow more time to reflect upon the Word. Be sure to allocate sufficient time to absorb the teachings within the passage.
- ___ Review the surrounding verses as well as the surrounding chapters to determine the intended meaning of the passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to provide spiritual insight to understand the messages from God.
- ___ It is also beneficial to prepare answers to basic questions such as the 5 W's and 1 H of the passage, which refer to who, what, when, where, why, and how.
 - ___ Who was Zacchaeus? (Refer to Luke 19:1-10.)
 - ___ What was his profession?
 - ___ When did the story of his conversion approximately take place?
 - ___ Where did the story take place?
 - ___ Why was Zacchaeus so eager to meet Lord Jesus?
 - ___ How did Zacchaeus come to receive the Lord?
- ___ Formulate a simple outline that can be used to guide the sequence of the Bible study. Include any important topics and details (historical background, character background, ancient customs, etc.) and pose thought-provoking questions.
- ___ Reflect on the message God is conveying, through examining the Bible and our relationship with Him. By understanding and acting upon the passage, God's Word will manifest in our lives. Consider these questions:
 - ___ What are God's commands in the passage?
 - ___ What shortcomings is God revealing to me?

Guideline for Bible Study

Leading

- What message of encouragement is God providing today?
- Consult other references that may provide historical or contextual perspectives on the passage. Avoid utilizing non-etymological references for interpretive purposes. Consider the following resources:
 - Etymological resources:
 - Strong's Concordance
 - The New Unger's Bible Dictionary
 - Publications by the True Jesus Church:
 - Bible Study Guide to Daniel
 - Bible Study Guide to Revelation
 - Holy Spirit Monthly
 - Manna
- Consider informing the Bible study members of the passage in advance so that they may dedicate time to read and ponder upon the passage.
- Physical Preparation
 - Get a good night of sleep the night before leading the Bible study. Bible study leaders need the energy to effectively lead a Bible study.

● At the Venue

- Prior to Bible Study
 - Arrive at the Bible study site a couple minutes earlier than everyone else in order to set up the room.
 - Sit down and prepare your heart as you wait for the Bible study group members to arrive and take their seats. (A circular formation of seats is recommended in order to form a close atmosphere where everyone can see eye to eye.)
- Commencing Bible Study
 - Begin the Bible study by saying either a silent prayer or a prayer of understanding.
 - Then, consecrate the Bible study. For example, say, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we begin today's Bible study."
- Observation
 - Have everyone turn to the passage, usually a chapter or an excerpt.
 - Take turns reading the passage by dividing it into segments. Each participant is assigned to read a specific number of verses until the passage is read.

Guideline for Bible Study

Leading

- Another method of reading is role-playing, where the members are assigned to read roles within the passage such as the narrator and characters.
- It may be helpful to allow the group members time to take a couple minutes to re-read the passage and reflect on its meaning while formulating any questions. Ask them to note any key words and basic questions including who, what, when, where, why, and how.
- o Interpretation
 - After the brief self-study, there is flexibility in the next step. You can ask the group members to summarize the chapter or take the initiative to summarize the chapter. This is to gain a basic understanding of the events and concepts within the passage.
 - Provide historical and character background.
 - Focus on understanding the basic concepts in the passage. Start to analyze the passage by dividing the passage into several key sections or subtopics, and focus on each section separately.
 - From your outline, discuss the topics and ask the questions, allowing the group members to participate and understand the content and important points.
 - Also, think of any additional questions that could arise during the course of studying the passage.
 - Be sure to keep track of time in order to end in a timely manner or on the scheduled time.
 - In the event that the Bible study discussion veers onto a tangent such as opinions unrelated to the main topic, be sure to kindly bring the discussion back to the topic at hand. Keep the emphasis on Bible study central at all times.
- o Life Application
 - Life application of the biblical passage allows group members to understand the message and how it relates to their own lives. The message may include different aspects such as morals, spiritual encouragement, comfort, spiritual warnings, spiritual meanings, prophecies, revelations, testimonies, etc.
 - For example, in the story of Jesus walking on water (refer to Matt 14:22-33.), it is a known fact that Peter hesitated to trust the instruction of Jesus. We can see that Peter's faith was weak.
 - The life application for this passage could be, for example: What are the "waves" and "storms" in our life that cause us to doubt God and sink? How do we overcome them? Are there any experiences you would like to share?

Guideline for Bible Study

Leading

- After thoroughly examining the passage's content and discussing the answers to the questions prepared beforehand, it is time to approach the life application portion of the Bible study, when the meaning behind the entire passage can be inferred. It is a good to tie the key sections together in this way in order to realize the big picture of the passage as a whole.
 - Be prepared with life application questions that are applicable to our daily walk of faith. When asked to reflect on these questions, group members can answer individually or take turns going around the room.
 - Make sure that the answers to the life application questions, along with the other content questions, can be verified through the Bible and Bible Study Guidance books.
 - If a group member happens to express a slightly unorthodox answer to a question, it is not necessary to point it out. However, it is necessary to come up with a concise and correct answer after each subtopic or before the final conclusion.
- Conclusion
 - Close the Bible study by reiterating the main theme of the passage and any important key points under each subtopic.
 - This allows the group members to emphasize any self-realizations and/or resolutions made during the Bible study.
- Additional Pointers
 - The Bible study usually starts out with easy topics that could develop into more difficult areas in order to generate interest. This is why general information such as introduction to historical background and character studies find their place in the beginning.
 - A Bible study leader should be sensitive to properly focusing the Bible study. Narrowing the scope of the study is beneficial as it can avoid distractions or tangents, while maximizing the allotted time and depth of study. By doing so, the Bible study can focus on God's truth.
 - Regarding consulting approved references, it is generally not recommended to consult random resources and opinions on the Internet as they might provide different and unacceptable interpretations.
 - If there are difficult questions that Bible study participants cannot provide a satisfactory answer to, please consult a senior member for further advice so that the answer can be given at the next Bible study.
 - In addition, if group members are not responsive, usually you can give hints and share some of your personal insights.
 - Make sure everyone in the Bible study participates.

Guideline for Bible Study

Leading

- Demonstrate good attitude, humility in expression, and brevity.
- Respect the opinions of others, and be willing to understand other people's views.
- If the Bible study happens to run overtime, it is important to decide whether it is worthwhile to extend the Bible study.
 - If there are spiritually urgent issues and problems that need to be further discussed or attended to, it is perhaps appropriate to extend Bible study by a little while.
 - However, this is still up to your judgment. The leader controls the time and should ultimately try to end the Bible study on time.
 - As a reminder, some urgent issues can also be resolved at the next Bible study or, if need be, discussed with a deacon or pastor.
- In the event that an individual breaks down emotionally, remember to be respectful of his/her feelings.
- It is wise to avoid discussion of highly controversial topics and questions as this may unnecessarily cause the prolonging of the Bible study as well as stir up divisive sentiments among the Bible study group.
- If arguments arise between Bible study members and invoke passionate responses, then it is best for you to act as the peacemaker and bring the focus of the discussion back to God's purpose of instilling His message in the Bible.